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"IS CUBA GOING RED?"

as broadcast over the

CBS TELEVISION NETWORK

Sunday, May 3, 1959

6:00 - 6:30 PM, EDT

Reported and narrated by Stuart Novins, CBS NEWS Correspondent

PRODUCED BY CBS NEWS

From Studio 56, New York

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IS CUBA GOING RED?

ANNOUNCER: The CBS Television Network presents.....
IS CUBA GOING RED?

CBS News correspondent Stuart Novins has just returned from Cuba, where he spent two months in an exhaustive study of the revolutionary government as it has emerged under Fidel Castro. He traveled throughout the island, talking to hundreds of people of all backgrounds and examined a mass of documentary evidence. For an examination of the question, "Is Cuba Going Red?" here now is Mr. Novins....

NOVINS: Good evening. The inescapable fact is brutally simple. The island of Cuba -- 90 miles off our shores, site of the American naval base that guards our southern defenses, anchor for our defense of the Panama Canal, and key to the political future of Latin America - this Cuban island is today a totalitarian dictatorship and is rapidly becoming a Communist beachhead in the Caribbean.

Despite the protestations of Democracy by Fidel Castro, despite the promise of the rebellion that ousted the corrupt state of Batista, Cuba is today a one-man government, held together by promises and fear....and control of the island's economic, political and social institutions is rapidly being taken over from that one man -- Fidel Castro -- whether he knows it or not -- by what is emerging, in the opinion of Western diplomatic sources, as the best organized Communist apparatus in the Caribbean.

It is no longer possible for Cubans to express publicly any opposition to the government without incurring swift and arbitrary reprisals.

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Any criticism of the Fidel Castro government is now denounced as "counter-revolutionary" and government practice makes "counter-revolution" punishable by property confiscation, imprisonment and/or death. Nowhere has the term "counter-revolution" been legally defined. That is why much of this report will be told in my voice rather than the voices of Cubans themselves.

Cuba's rebellion, which ended with the flight of Batista on January 1st, created a perfect laboratory and target for Communist penetration. Here's how it works.

In the classic strategy of Communist infiltration, there are two main tactics: to impoverish and make impotent the rich and middle class; and deliberately to create mass unemployment, hunger and discontent among the poor. In the ensuing chaos, the Communist hard-core, already infiltrated into key control points of the government and the economy, can then take over.

What are the check-points to watch for in a totalitarian state?

You look at the general economy, for its effect on the lives of the people, and particularly of the Middle Class.

You look for the development of political opposition parties and the government's attitude toward them.

A vital key is the press and news media.

You watch for what happens to the cultural and mass entertainment media....to the education system.

No totalitarian government can operate without total reliance on its Army. So you look for the political complexions of the Army's leaders, for signs of purges within Army ranks, for political indoctrination of troops.

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You examine the country's court and judicial system.

You check the labor unions. Are they free?

The final and basic test, of course, of any government is -- can the people change their government or its policies by peaceful ballot?

Now let's apply those check-points to what is happening in Cuba today.

This is David Salvador. He is Secretary-General -- top man -- of the Cuban Confederation of Labor....referred to as the CTC. David Salvador is 38 years old. As head of the only and all-inclusive central laobr movement, he is one of the most powerful men in Cuba today. He was appointed to his post by Fidel Castro.

We talked with Salvador in his CTC office in Havana two weeks ago.

Mr. Salvador, does your Confederation of Labor control the electric industry?

IN SPANISH. (MR. SALVADOR NODS "YES" to ALL THESE QUESTIONS)

NOVINS: The telephone industry?

IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: The sugar industry?

IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: And tobacco?

IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: What about the bank workers?

IN SPANISH.

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NOVINS: You have all of the industries?

IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: The drug laboratories?

IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: And everything else?

IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: The clinics? The laboratories? The factories? Everything?

IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: The airlines?

IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: You control the airlines?

IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: Do you control radio and television?

IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: All the television .....

IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: The printing presses?

IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: Do you control them?

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IN SPANISH.

NOVINS: Mr. Salvador, it has been published that you were once a Communist -- a member of the Communist Party. Is this true?

TRANSLATOR: IN SPANISH TO MR. SALVADOR.

SALVADOR: IN SPANISH TO TRANSLATOR.

TRANSLATOR: Many years ago when I was very young I was a member of the Communistic Party. But it's been a very long time since I have been a member.

NOVINS: Is it true that you once ran for office here in Cuba on the Communist ticket?

TRANSLATOR: IN SPANISH TO MR. SALVADOR.

SALVADOR: IN SPANISH TO TRANSLATOR.

TRANSLATOR: Yes, when I was a member of the Party when I was young.

NOVINS: Mr. Salvador, are you a Communist now?

TRANSLATOR: IN SPANISH TO MR. SALVADOR.

SALVADOR: No, no, no.

NOVINS: Information made available to this reporter, shows that David Salvador, despite the assertion you just heard that he is not now a Communist, during the last two years, was part of the underground Communist movement as well as of the rebel movement.... that he operated under the code name of "Mario"....that he maintained contact with the Party, chiefly through three known card-carrying Communists -- or their couriers -- Lazaro Pena, a veteran Party Labor Movement leader, Blas Roca, another Communist Labor Movement activist, both of whom were outside of Cuba - and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, key strategist and political action expert of the Cuban equivalent of the

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Politburo, who remained inside Cuba.

On March 22nd, Salvador was seated on the platform before the Presidential Palace in Havana, when Jose Figueres, ex-president of Costa Rica, spoke before thousands of workers at a labor rally. Figueres pointed to the dangers of communism in Latin America, and urged Cuba to take a pro-Western position in the Cold War. Salvador jumped from his seat, grabbed the microphone from Figueres, and shouted, "We cannot side with the Americans who oppress us." Shortly thereafter Castro called for Cuban neutrality in the Cold War.

Thirteen days later, the Costa Rican Communist leader, Manuel Mora, arrived in Havana. That night, Fidel Castro told his nation over TV, that Figueres "is a bad friend of Cuba....a bad revolutionary."

Salvador's Confederation of Labor spreads into every aspect of Cuban life. It is one jaw of the vise that grips the whole economy. The other jaw of the vise is the government itself.

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On March 10th, the government issued a decree that arbitrarily cut all apartment and house rentals: 50% on $100; apartments, 40% on apartments up to $200.

But here's what happened. Traditionally, middle-class savings have gone into apartments like these. Now, the apartment house owners, their income cut in half, still face mortgage and loan payments that have not been reduced proportionately. The Communist-dominated unions have simultaneously raised the cost of painters, electricians, carpenters, maintenance workers. All new construction in Cuba, for practical purposes, has stopped. 120-thousand construction workers have no work to do. Those contractors with people already on the payrolls are forbidden by law to fire or lay off any workers. Companies have to pay the workers out of reserves, just as the apartment owner has to pay his debts out of savings. With the grinding to a halt of the construction industry, the steel industry, cement production and subsidiary manufacture has been cut back an estimated 60%.

On April 8th, the government issued another decree that say, in effect, all privately owned but vacant land must now be sold to anyone who wants to build on it. And the government fixed the price of $4 a meter, regardless of the original cost to the owner. The practical expropriation implicit in these two decrees alone, have not only virtually wiped out savings of the middle-class owners, they have brought more unemployment to the laborers. They have created so much uncertainty that banks are refusing to make loans. Cuban investment capital is virtually frozen.

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As investment shrinks, production drops off, and in almost every industry in Cuba, there has been a simultaneous demand from David Salvador's Confederation of Labor to add more people to the payrolls at higher wages.

These demands are enforced by slow down strikes on the part of the workers, and by sabotage. They are supported by the government.

When a company has almost exhausted its resources, the government -- to keep the payrolls going - arbitrarily takes over its management. This process is known as "interventing." More than 475 large businesses have been "intervented" by the government on economic or political grounds. More are on the way. No one knows -- or has said publicly -- what happens to these companies when all the cash is gone.

There is no doubt that Cuba's poor have been exploited in the past. No doubt that genuine reforms are needed. But the unemployment figure of 40% of the work force that Castro inherited on January first, has now expanded to almost 50% of jobless or below subsistence level as a direct result of the government-union squeeze. That army of unemployed will get bigger in the next four months. Sugar grinding ends this month. That will put about 200-thousand more out of jobs.

Fidel Castro has ordered a "Buy Cuban Products" campaign, and enforced it with powerful publicity and increased tariffs. The announced purpose: to increase Cuban production and stop the flow of dollars out of the country. But here is what is happening in one sample industry.

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There are about 400 Cuban and foreign drug companies in the country. The government has indicated imminent tariff increases on imported raw drugs which are packaged in Cuba. Simultaneously the government has cut imported drug prices 20%, although Cuban drug prices have been frozen for years and packaging costs have jumped 60%. The result? Of the four-hundred drug companies, only about 40 will survive. Spokesmen for the industry told us that when the present stockpile of antibiotics and vitamins is exhausted, there will be none for Cuba's sick. A black market in antibiotics has already begun. The industry, which involves about 50-million dollars volume a year, faces economic disaster; the thousands of Cubans it employs face joblessness.

The rapid disintegration of Cuba's economy from the most flourishing economy in the Caribbean area fits the classic pattern that makes easy a Communist take over, if the other control points check out, too. Let's look.

The bilateral squeeze -- government on the one side, Communist-led unions on the other -- that has clamped down on business, has also clamped down on business' advertising budgets. With revenue cut, most news media -- newspapers, radio, television -- are operating very close to economic failure. The government has just decreed a 30% wage increase for editorial employees. Many papers will have to close down. One Havana television station and a chain of radio stations have already been taken over by the government on political grounds.

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This network is now called "Rebel Radio" -- and it is run by Violetta Casals, a Communist.

Another television station has been "persuaded" to keep a Communist in its staff of news commentators.

The newspaper "Revolucion," is the voice of Castro's 26th of July Movement. Its editor is Carlos Franqui, a former staffer of the Communist Party newspaper "Hoy." Both papers, "Revolucion" and "Hoy," frequently publish the same stories under the same headlines....they frequently run parallel editorial lines. "Hoy" increasingly gives credit to the Communists for having started the anti-Batista revolution.

Fidel Castro, in a series of speeches which reached a high point during the week preceding his friendship visit to the United States, publicly accused the Associated Press, the United Press International, "Time" magazine and other U. S. news sources, with being paid by what he calls the "international oligarchies," to print lies about his government. During the same week, "Izvestia," the official Soviet newspaper, said, "The monopolistic press of the United States has accelerated an unharnessed campaign against Cuba."

Immediately following the Castro attacks on the American press services, the United Press office in Havana received three telephoned threats that its headquarters would be bombed. The families of some of the employees have been threatened with harm. The union has moved in with new demands.

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Castro has made similar attacks on Cuban papers. Within the past two months, three papers, "Avance," "Prensa Libre" and "Zigzag," which raised tentative questions about government policies, were publicly castigated by Castro, who urged his listeners to boycott them. There has been no marked editorial probing of government policy by those papers since then.

A leading anti-Communist writes for the newspaper, "El Mundo," one of the largest. His name is Juan Luis Martin. Martin, who wrote about the increased danger of Communist infiltration in Latin America, was secretly arrested by the Castro police and imprisoned without charges in La Cabana Fortress, the Army prison, five weeks ago. For two days there was no public knowledge of his arrest. His paper, "El Mundo," printed nothing about it. A "Times Of Havana" reporter learned about it. He called "El Mundo," who confirmed the arrest but declined to say why it had remained silent.

For more than two weeks, Martin was kept incommunicado. No charges were filed.

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Friends of Martin, commissioned a man, Doctor Oscar Molina, a lawyer and newspaperman, to act as Martin's counsel. Molina was told that as a lawyer, he could not see Martin until 24 hours before his trial, for which no date had been set. He was told that as a newsman, his application for a pass to the prison cells had been denied.

When it became apparent that the lid might be blown off the story on the eve of Fidel Castro's trip to the States, "Revolucion", the paper run by Carlos Franqui, printed a story which quoted the "La Cabana Purging Commission." It was the first time this term had been used. The Purging Commission, said "Revolucion," had explained Martin's arrest on the grounds that Martin had allegedly been employed as a professor of military history at the Army Staff School under Batista, and that he had been employed as a translator for BRAC, the Bureau for the Repression of Communists.

The Purging Commission explanation did <u>not</u> explain that Martin had held the same jobs under the pre-Batista administrations of Carlos Prio and Grau San Martin. It did not explain why the newsman's arrest had been secret, why he had been held incommunicado, why he had been forbidden to see his lawyer, his friends or his family, or why no official charges had been filed against him. (As of April 16th, he was still incommunicado.)

More on the press.

In Camaguey, a large city in the middle of the island a revolutionary newspaper called "Adelante" was established shortly after January 1st. It contracted with an existing paper, the fifty-year old "El Camagueyano," to use its presses and offices. In early April, it owed "El Camagueyano" $3,000. The Revolutionary officials closed down "El Camagueyano."

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The publisher, Walfredo Rodriguez says, "It would be stupid on our part to say the Revolution has done this. But I do say that these things are done in the name of the Revolution and by those who represent the Revolution in Camaguey."

The newsprint on which all Cuban papers are printed is imported. The government import license can be cancelled or the import quotas cut down. The only exceptions are "Hoy," the Communist Party paper and "Revolucion," edited by Carlos Franqui, They use paper made from bagasse, a sugar-cane by-product.

To summarize the condition of the Press -- the papers are financially unstable, morally intimidated. With "Hoy," "Revolucion" and Fidel Castro beating down opposition or criticism, while there is no official censorship, there is, for practical purposes of opposition, no free press in Cuba today. Radio and television are in much the same position, different stations to differing degrees. The broadcast bellweathers are "Rebel Radio," led by Communist Violetta Cassals and "Union Radio," run by David Salvador.

It is not only news and current opinion that is being stifled, history is being rewritten.

Fidel Castro has appointed a new committee to do the job. It is called, "The Commission on Revision of Cuban History Books." It was conceived when Castro in a public appearance stated that American participation in the Spanish-American War was for imperialist motives. He said Cuban text books should be revised to show this and to correct other "misconceptions." The Committee is dominated by: Elias Entrango, a former member of the Communist-front Congress for Peace and a close associate of Juan Marinello, leader of the Cuban Communist Party. Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring of the commission is the strongly anti-American Historian of the City of

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Havana (a government post). Western authoritative sources list him as "probably a Communist -- certainly a fellow-traveller." Another member, Angel Del Cerro, is a self-advertised Catholic layman who, without authorization from the Church, engages in public debates with Communists and -- according to Western diplomatic observers --always comes off second best. He is also Director of Cultural Affairs for Havana and thus determines who uses what hall and when.

The Director of the National Commission of Culture, is Vicentina Antunia. She controls foreign visiting lecture tours, concerts, ballets, and the National Theater. Informed and authoritative sources show that she has a long history of identification with Communist activities. And so has Francisco Alonso, top man of the National Fine Arts Commission.

Let's look at the Army.

Raul Castro, brother of Fidel, named by Fidel as his successor as head of the Revolutionary movement, denies that he is a Communist. The record shows that in 1953 Raul went to Vienna for a Communist-front Congress and then disappeared in Bucharest, behind the Iron Curtain, for several weeks. On March 30th, this year, he addressed a worker's meeting in Cuba, defending David Salvador's anti-American outburst against Jose Figueres and supporting neutrality for Cuba in the Cold War. Members of the 26th July Movement told this reporter that in 1957, Raul Castro threatened to kill his brother Fidel, over disagreements about rebel activity. Raul organized and carried out the kidnapping of Americans during the revolution. Raul Castro controls all the armed forces and the police. His wife, Vilma Espin, has Communist associations. Her sister is at least a pro-Communist. Raul Castro has appointed a Communist, Lt. Gonzalez Mantichi, as commander of the central Cuban Army arsenal, San Ambrozlo.

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Mantichi's brother, Enrique, also a Communist, is active in the Confederacion of Labor and particularly in unions that deal with television stations.

The Army commander in Santiago is Commandante Manuel Pineiro. The Army Commander in Las Villas is Demetrio Monseny. Informed and completely reliable sources classify them as "Communists or Communist supporters."

The Army's Commander of La Cabana Fortress, the military and political prison, where many of the more than 500 executions have taken place, is Ernesto "Che" Guevara, a professional revolutionary from Argentina, who actively supported Jacobo Arbenz the Communist leader in Guatemala. Guevara's second-in-command at La Cabana until a month ago, was Commandante Benjamin Camino, an open anti-Communist. When Guevara became ill and had to leave his post temporarily, Camino, as deputy, assumed command in Guevara's absence. Within days, he was arrested and charged with "conspiracy" -- no specifications given. He has not been heard from publicly since.

The man who was defense attorney in the Sosa Blanco Sports Palace trial, Captain Aristides D'Acosta was also defense attorney for the Cuban Air Force pilots who were found innocent of war crimes by a military court and then personally ordered to be retried and found guilty by Fidel Castro. As an Army captain, he was ordered back from the Santiago trial to Havana. He was met at the airport by a group of armed guards. He said to reporters present, "I do not think I am under arrest." But he has since resigned from the Army and has not been seen publicly since.

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The man who was presiding judge at the first trial of the pilots -- the trial at which they had been acquitted -- was Major Felix Pena. On April 14th, his body was found in his car. A pistol bullet had been fired into his chest. The Army Press Chief Captain Manolo Iglesias, called it "suicide;" said a note had been found near Pena, which read, "This is motivated by personal reasons and thus must not be mixed with politics in any way."

The Army holds indoctrination courses. The man in charge of the Army Information Program, including political education, is Lieutenant Alfredo Guevara, a Communist. In many Army posts, the only or most widely-circulated newspaper is the Communist Party paper, "Hoy."

In local police stations (they, too, are under Raul Castro's control) classes in arithmetic, reading, etc. are given to the police. This reporter has seen police orders which direct that promising policemen be selected by the teachers for political indoctrination at the Army's Camp Columbia, now called "Libertad." This reporter has also seen orders directing that no member of the police force shall make any public statement about political indoctrination.

What happens to people who are arrested?

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There is no Habeas Corpus in Cuba. That fundamental right in any free society, was suspended at Fidel Castro's direction on February 2nd. Arrests can be secret - and frequently are. It is impossible to get from any government source even the number of people who are now under arrest in the country. Prisoners are not charged with specific accusations until about 24 hours before their trials, often weeks or months after their arrest. Prisoners can be -- and often are -- held incommunicado. They simply disappear. People have been imprisoned for alleged crimes that do not appear in any written laws, or are punished by sentences that are not provided for by law. There is no Bill of Rights. In Havana, the government has opened a "denunciation center." Here, individuals may come and denounce to police, anyone whom they wish to charge with "counter-revolution." The accused is arrested. He is investigated, sometimes for long periods of time. If he is found guilty of this legally undefined crime, he is sentenced. If he is found innocent, he is allowed to leave. But his business colleagues, his friends are reluctant to associate with him, because his case can be reopened at any time.

Let's look at the schools.

At a speech in March, before 386 teachers at the Ministry of Education, the Under-Secretary of Education, Luis Lebredo, said the government has plans to eliminate in all schools, public or private, the teaching of English. When asked by a teacher what benefit that would bring to Cuba, he answered, "We are not here to make Cuba an American colony."

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In private schools, the Confederation of Labor has raised the costs of workers, while "Revolucion" says the government threatens to force cuts in tuition. In at least two of the largest private schools in Havana, Baldor School and the Lafayette School, acts of sabotage have been committed.

In the public school system, at least 3, 300 employees, including 500 teachers and 27 professors, were fired in February and March. Many of them had taught for more than twenty years. 2500 were fired in one single day, March 31st.

Now the law says that none of the remaining teachers, or any that may be hired from now on, may be fired for any reason. The way is clear for the hiring of Communists or sympathizers. The Minister of Education is 27-year old Armando Hart, described by those close to him as "at least a left-wing radical." His wife, Haydee Santamaria, a close advisor and aide to Fidel Castro in the mountains is evaluated as "a fellow-traveller and long-time associate of known Communists."

Now let's look at the Cuban ballot.....the chance for free elections.

In early January, Fidel Castro said, "We will hold elections in 18 months or two years." We asked him why he didn't do it at once. His reply was that there was no political opposition. He said he wanted time for political opposition parties to develop.

Has political opposition been given a chance to develop? The answer is unequivocably "No." The fact is that political opposition is now legalistically synonymous with "counter-revolution," punishable by property confiscation, imprisonment, death.

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There is no press to support political opposition. Legal opposition simply cannot form in the present climate of increasing repression.

On April 9th in Havana and April 12th in Camaguey, Fidel Castro said, "Cuba will hold elections only when everyone has a job; when every farmer owns his own land; when illiteracy is wiped out; when," he said, "Cuba has regained its sovereignty." And he added, "Only the reactionaries want us to hold elections before the revolution is finished."

The most conservative estimate possible is that under ideal conditions, this represents at least a twenty-year program.

But here in the United States, where elections are thought to be important, Fidel Castro said last week he thought Cuba would have elections in four years.

The flexibility of Castro's predictions enforces those who believe that Fidel Castro, hungry for approval and adulation, will persuasively tell any given audience what he thinks it wants to hear.

What about Castro himself -- and what is his part in the Communist plan for infiltration?

There is no evidence to support the charge that Fidel Castro is a member of the Communist Party. It is most probable that he is not. He has been a revolutionary throughout most of his relatively mature years. His economic, social and political program is generally believed to be sincerely motivated but completely whimsical and unplanned. He has an uncanny and great talent for

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persuasive language, but the record shows that his speeches are frequently self-contradictory. He has kindled hopes for Cuba's poor that can never be extinguished and probably never realized. But they are the golden promises that can be held out by the Communists if it becomes obvious that Castro cannot deliver. He has cleaned graft out of the government. He can take no criticism and little advice. He is naive economically, inexperienced administratively, stubborn as well as naive politically. He has provided and supported a climate for Communist expansion. He has provided and supported an open expression of anti-Americanism that is spreading fast.

Most knowledgeable Cubans will agree that if the Confederation of Labor called a general strike tomorrow and Fidel Castro came out against it on anti-Communist grounds, he still has enough support to kill the strike. But these same men will tell you that 8 months from now, in the same dilemma, Castro might not have the power to kill it. Many Cubans believe that Castro may already be too deeply enmeshed in Communist support to pull out. All are agreed that if anything happens to Castro physically, Cuba would be plunged into the worst blood bath of its history. Some, the newly-organizing underground, say violence is now the only way left to throw the Communists out..and that means a blood bath.

And meanwhile, by using the economic situation as an excuse, Fidel Castro consistently dodges the one solution: free elections. If he makes possible, now, truly free elections, guaranteed by constitutional safeguards, the ballot would replace his Communist-exploited personal dictatorship with a constitutional democracy. It would force the Communists into an open count instead

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of a conspiracy. It would strengthen the anti-Communists who feel they have now no course to take but violence. And Fidel Castro himself would emerge as a greater Cuban hero than ever.

But without free constitutional elections, so far as the United States is conerned, it really doesn't matter whether Castro is a Communist or a willing dupe of Communists. The result in Cuba is the same.

As one Western observer put it "If it looks like a tiger, and growls like a tiger, and has claws and teeth and muscles like a tiger's; if it produces cubs that act like tiger cubs, it would be the prudent decision of a reasonable man not to open its cage and invite it home to lunch."

This is Stuart Novins. Good night.

ANNOUNCER: This program has been produced under the supervision and control of CBS NEWS....This program was pre-recorded.

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